MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

4 MARCH 1987

Lebanon

Units of the Lebanese Army's 12th Brigade deployed along the coastal road between Beirut and Sidon 4 March, Beirut radio reported. Citing a security source, the radio said the move was being carried out without any impediment.

On the political situation, Voice of Lebanon radio indicated that President Amin al-Jumayyil will hold a summit meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad 5 March, noting that an agreement to hold the eighth round of Lebanese-Syrian talks was reached after Al-Jumayyil was briefed by an envoy on the points of the plan worked out in Damascus by Prime Minister Rashid Karami and other Muslim leaders. Lebanese Forces Commander Samir Ja'ja' had earlier reaffirmed his opposition to the plan in remarks to journalists cited by the Voice of Lebanon, stressing that he rejects any attempt to reduce the powers of the Lebanese president and reorganize the Lebanese Army. A Lebanese Forces statement broadcast by the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon accused Syria of trying to peddle the December 1985 tripartite agreement and of "refusing any alternative to it." Denouncing Syria's entry into West Beirut as a "partitionist step" aimed at serving "specific Syrian political objectives," the statement asserted that a solution to the civil war must be based on accord among the Lebanese themselves. In Ihdin, former President Sulayman Franjiyah's Radio of Free and Unified Lebanon said "political observers" are discussing the possibility that the authorities in East Beirut may ask Jordan to send troops to achieve "complete legitimate security instead of the street security now dominating East Beirut."

At a news conference reported by Voice of National Resistance radio, Amal Movement leader Nabih Birri called on the Lebanese Army to take control of security in East Beirut, but he expressed opposition to the deployment of Syrian troops in the southern suburb.

Iran-Iraq War

Iranian forces captured Iraq's strongest fortifications north of the Fish Lake in a "blitz attack" the night of 3 March, an Iranian commander announced in a statement reported by IRNA. He said the captured defense lines comprised crescent-shaped walls 8 meters high and 700 meters long, adding that Revolution Guards armored units played a key role in the attack. The commander claimed that over 3,400 Iraqis were killed or wounded in the fighting on the southern front 2-4 March. However, Iraqi commanders cited by INA said that thousands of Iranians were killed in repeated human wave attacks in an area that has become a "graveyard" for Iranian troops and armored vehicles.

Regarding Iraq's defense capability, a 2 March article in Kuwait's *Al-Qabas* stated that the Soviet leadership has "unconditionally agreed to all Iraq's requests" for heavy weapons and has decided to supply Iraq with MiG-29 aircraft. The USSR has also agreed to reschedule Iraq's debts on easy terms and over a long period.

Turkish Cross-Border Raid

A government spokesman announced that Turkish warplanes carried out 4 March raids against "terrorist positions" on both sides of the border with Iraq, Ankara radio reported. The spokesman noted that the operation had "nothing to do with" the Iran-Iraq war. According to AFP, Turkish troops have been involved in a "major mopping-up operation" since 22 February when 14 people were killed by Kurdish guerrillas who attacked Tasdelen village near Hakkari.

Israel

Pollard Affair — Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin dismissed Jonathan Pollard's claim that high-ranking Israeli officials authorized his espionage operations, Jerusalem radio reported. The radio broadcast Rabin's remark that Israel has carried out its commitments in regard to the Pollard affair and finds it "painful" that the issue is being "continued and dragged."

Lavi — The Jerusalem Post noted the IDF General Staff's recommendation that Israel drop the Lavi program and purchase F-16C aircraft instead.

Egypt

Five Libyan military men and their C-130 were transferred from southern Egypt to Cairo pending disposition of their request for political asylum, according to a statement from an "official source" carried by MENA. The statement noted that Egypt, which observes international norms, has no wish to "aggravate differences with its neighbors."

Six "extremist communists" were arrested for conspiring to launch an "agitation" operation, MENA reported, noting that printing equipment and Marxist propaganda were seized.

Libya

The General People's Congress session broadcast by Tripoli television endorsed a variety of basic people's congress resolutions on foreign policy issues and domestic concerns including budget and finances and social services. One resolution condemned the Agricultural Marketing Company and called for a "purge" of "merchants and middlemen" from it.

Syria

Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam received V.P. Sidenko, Soviet special representative and ambassador at large, for "businesslike and friendly" talks, Moscow radio reported, adding that the Soviet diplomat also met with Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

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Pakistani 'Reconnaissance' Flights Protested

LD021733 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari
1600 GMT 2 Mar 87

[Text] The charge d'affaires of Pakistan's Embassy in Kabul was summoned to the Foreign Affairs Ministry today at 1200 and the following points were made to him by the head of the First Political Section:

Despite the repeated protests by the DRA Government, the violation of DRA airspace by the Pakistani Air Force is continuing. An aircraft of the Pakistani Air Force carried out four reconnaissance flights, at various elevations and at different intervals, over Spin Buldak in Afghanistan's airspace, on 1 March 1987, from 1415 to 1918. It then turned back toward Pakistan's territory.

The DRA Government protests to the Pakistan Government against this aggression and obvious violation. It demands from the relevant Pakistan authorities an end to such aggression. In particular, at this sensitive moment, when talks are continuing between high ranking delegations of both countries in Geneva, resorting to such [word indistinct] will affect the sound climate of talks, and the negative consequences will rest with Pakistan's authorities.

Abdol Wakil Cited on Optimism Over Geneva Talks

AU031527 Paris AFP in English 1520 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Geneva, March 3 (AFP) — Afghan Foreign Minister Abdol Wakil expressed optimism here Tuesday over current indirect talks between Kabul and Islamabad, which informed sources said had withstood "difficulties" over last week's Afghan air raids on Pakistan.

Addressing the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Mr Wakil said his country had the "goodwill, political determination, and necessary flexibility" to make the talks successful. "Given a reciprocal attitude on the part of the other side, the process of Geneva talks is bound to bear positive results and we shall be able to achieve a speedy political solution" to the situation in Afghanistan, he added. He said a settlement with Pakistan "would in turn accelerate the pace of return of the limited military contingents of the Soviet Union, this traditional friend of Afghanistan, to their peace-loving country."

But sources said the UN-mediated talks, which have been closed to the press, became tense for a time after the raids last Thursday and Friday, which were confirmed Tuesday by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The attacks, on villages and Afghan refugee camps in the Miram Shah and Parachinar regions, reportedly killed more than 100 people and injured 200. The UNHCR said 40 people died and 87 were injured in the refugee camp of Matasangar alone.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan said Sunday that he would react vigorously to the raids but would not put the talks into question.

UN mediator Diego Cordovez said before the talks resumed on February 25 that he had received a new Afghan proposal on a timetable for a Soviet troop withdrawal, the key issue to be resolved here. Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said in Bangkok Monday that Kabul's proposal for a pull-out in four-years had been brought down to 22 months. This is still above the few months demanded by Pakistan — a request backed by the United States, which like Moscow, is considered by analysts as an important party in the background of the talks.

Mr Wakil also denied on Tuesday UN allegations that the Kabul regime had violated human rights. He said a UN report listing such violations was "one-sided, unrealistic, and politically motivated."

He invited the author of the report, Felix Ermacora, to visit the country along with two other UN commission members.

Mr Ermacora was not allowed by Kabul to visit Afghanistan while drawing up his report, which claimed that the regime's recent policy of reconciliation had not improved a dramatic record of human rights violations.

Mr Wakil denied Mr Ermacora's claim that the number of Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries had sharply increased in the past few months, to reach more than five million. He said more than 25,000 refugees had returned to Afghanistan since the new policy was enacted in January, and he attacked "certain neighbouring countries" that were "preventing the return of Afghans to their country." Mr Wakil added that 15,000 mujahidin rebels had stopped fighting the Kabul regime and had joined the government side. He also said "a large number of political prisoners" had been set free since January.

190 Prisoners Released Under Amnesty Decree

LD031936 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari
1530 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] In accordance with a Revolutionary Council Presidium decree concerning a general amnesty for prisoners, 190 prisoners were released today from Pol-e Charkhi central jail.

The BAKHTAR correspondent reported that the released prisoners expressed thanks and gratitude for this humanitarian action and they have pledged to take an active part in the process of national reconciliation, and not to spare any effort for the cessation of fratricide and restoration of peace in the country.

Netherlands Prime Minister Arrives for Visit

BK020925 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 2 Mar 87

[Text] The Netherlands prime minister, Mr R.F.M. Lubbers, arrived in New Delhi today on a 3-day visit. He was received at the airport by the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, and his Cabinet colleagues. Speaking to radio newsreel, Mr Lubbers said he has great expectations from the visit. Mr Lubbers later called on the president, Giani Zail Singh, at Rashtrapati Bhavan [President's House].

Attends Honorary Banquet

BK030308 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0240 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] The prime minister has expressed concern at the nuclear arms race and said lasting world peace cannot be secured through stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Mr Rajiv Gandhi was speaking at a banquet hosted in honor of the visiting Netherlands prime minister, Mr Lubbers, in New Delhi. He said the situation in southern Africa calls for urgent concerted action by the international community. He emphasized the need for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the racist Pretoria regime.

Mr Gandhi urged the Netherlands to galvanize the European Community to play an effective role in eliminating racism in South Africa.

In his speech, Mr Lubbers lauded India's role in the Nonaligned Movement and said the European Community is in favor of further expansion of trade relations with India. Mr Lubbers said India and the Netherlands have entered a stage of broader partnership in the fields of science, technology, and culture.

Netherlands Offers Project Aid

BK031640 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] The Netherlands is prepared to give 550-crore-rupees assistance to India for a wide range of economic and technical projects. The prime minister of Netherlands, Mr Lubbers, told newsmen in New Delhi today that this long-term assistance will cover development of water transport, water management, dredging of rivers, modernization of fleets, and training and management. He said that he had discussions with the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, on possibilities of further strengthening Indo-Dutch economic relations. Mr Lubbers said that his country will give another 75 crore rupees for the implementation of rural water supply scheme, irrigation, and environment protection.

Soviet Naval Chief Meets Defense Minister 3 Mar

BK031428 Delhi General Overseas Service in English
1330 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] The Soviet deputy minister for defense and commander-in-chief of naval forces, Admiral V. N. Chernavin, called on the defense minister, Mr V.P. Singh, in New Delhi today. During their 30-minute meeting they discussed matters of mutual interest. Admiral Chernavin, who is on a 5-day visit to India, will visit naval establishments at Goa and Vasakhapatnam.

Gandhi on No 'Let Up' in Defense Preparedness

BK040846 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has said there can be no let up in India's defense preparedness as very large arms sales have taken place and continue to take place in one of our neighboring countries. Disagreeing with an opposition member's contention in the Lok Sabha today that the country's self reliance in the manufacture of sophisticated defense weapons is negligible, Mr Gandhi asserted that we are producing such arms. He said some of the sophisticated weapons produced in the country are comparable to the best in the world. However, Mr Gandhi said that all requirements of defense cannot be indigenized and no country can be completely self reliant in these matters. Mr Gandhi said that there is no shortcoming in research and development efforts. He said the efforts are based on the foundations laid down by Mrs Indira Gandhi and they will hold our defense in good stead.

U.S. Should Know 'Complexity' of Arming Pakistan

BK031413 Delhi General Overseas Service in English
1340 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Commentary: "Pakistan's Atom Bomb and America" by Sunil Roy of the *Press Trust of India*]

[Text] Pakistan's repeated denial over the years that it does not have an atom bomb has been blasted by its own maker. Now one does not have to look for an alibi, and the proverbial story of crying wolf has at long last been proved. Dr Abdul Qadir Khan, father of the Islamic bomb, is now on record as saying that America knows about it. He even boasted that what the Central Intelligence Agency — CIA — has been saying about Pakistan possessing the bomb is correct. He also corroborated the speculation of some foreign newspapers in a recent press interview. The newspaper interview quoted the Pakistani scientist — the man behind the bomb — as asserting that the testing of the bomb need not be underground. It can be done in a laboratory through a simulator. Dr Khan, who heads the top secret uranium laboratories at Kahuta, said that Pakistan has succeeded in enriching uranium to 93.5 percent and had tested a triggering device for a nuclear weapon last year. What is even more revealing is that Pakistan has also mastered plutonium reprocessing and is now way ahead of India in the field.

Questioned closely as to whether Pakistan had actually tested the bomb, Dr Khan counterposed: Is it necessary? During his interview, Dr Khan boasted that Pakistan had taken only 7 years to assemble tc bomb.

Obviously, India is seriously concerned over the disclosure that Pakistan has developed an atomic weapon. This is the first time

that a Pakistani scientist of Dr Khan's standing has come out so openly about his country's success story in manufacturing an atomic weapon. The reports only confirmed India's charge that Pakistan's nuclear program is weapon-oriented, although Islamabad has tirelessly tried to tell the world that its nuclear program is meant for peaceful purposes. The newspaper interview published simultaneously in London and Delhi evidently shook the interviewee. Dr Khan called the news report mischievous, false, and concocted, attempting to malign Pakistan. He even suggested that he never gave an interview to anyone, while the journalist concerned maintained that the interview lasted 1 hour.

The role of U.S. Administration in Pakistan's nuclear program can best be described as turning Nelson's eye to it, knowing fully well its implications not only for the region but also the world at large. Interestingly, the United States has decided [as heard] to comment on the controversial interview. Pakistan has emboldened by a 6-year waiver from the Symington Amendment, under which aid to Pakistan was stopped in 1979 because of Pakistan's nuclear enrichment program. The American Administration appears to be obsessed by the theory of balance of power in the Indian subcontinent. The administration assured the U.S. Congress last week that the American military aid to Pakistan would not be allowed to disturb the present military balance in the subcontinent. Although Pakistan was debarred from receiving arms aid from America in 1979 under the Symington Amendment, it was reversed 2 years later. In 1981, the administration secured from the U.S. Congress the 6-year waiver, which ends on 30 September this year. It is reported that over the next few months the American Administration will make a determined effort to secure another waiver to ensure that its second aid package of $4.02 billion to Pakistan remains unaffected from the critics of aid in the U.S. Congress.

The result of the U.S. military aid to Pakistan is too well known to the rest of the world. It helped Pakistan to launch three wars against India since 1947. Besides, the unprincipled arms supply to Pakistan has vitiated the security environment of the region. India is occasionally faced with arms buildup from across the border. Fortunately, a timely action a fortnight ago defused a situation getting worse. It can be safely assumed that the continued arms aid to Pakistan running into billions of dollars has not only created tension on the Indian borders but also on the Afghan border. No wonder a political solution to the Afghan problem remains a far cry, although an open offer for the participation of rebels in the government was made last month. It is high time the U.S. understands the complexity it creates by arming Pakistan.

Delhi Notes Visa Restrictions Raised by UK

BK031003 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Government has taken up the matter of visa restrictions by the British Government on the immigrants from five nonwhite nations. These countries are India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Ghana. The minister of state for external affairs, Mr Eduardo Faleiro, told the Rajya Sabha that talks are on both in Delhi and London on this issue.

3 Killed in Punjab 'Terrorist' Incidents

BK031606 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] In Punjab, three persons were shot dead and a child seriously injured in two separate incidents of terrorist activities today. At Jagraon in Ludhiana District, two persons were shot dead and a child injured when some scooter-borne terrorists fired indiscriminately at a marketplace. In the second incident at Jullundur, a local college lecturer was shot dead by terrorists.

The working committee of the ruling Akali Dal in Punjab has reiterated its full faith in the leadership of Mr Barnala [the Punjab chief minister]. The committee, which met in Chandigarh this afternoon, also endorsed the resolutions adopted at the Sikh convention held in Longowal village last month.

'Notorious Terrorists' Arrested in Punjab

BK031005 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] The Border Security Force (BSF) has apprehended three notorious terrorists who had robbed 22,000 rupees from the state electricity board office in Gurdaspur District of Punjab. The terrorists were escaping on a stolen motorcycle when they were challenged by a BSF party. Some arms and ammunition have also been recovered from them.

Noorani on Indian Talks, Afghanistan, AWACS

BK031629 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] The prime minister, Mr Mohammad Khan Junejo, has directed the legal reforms committee headed by Khwaja Mohammad Safdar, MNA [Member of National Assembly], to speed up its work for making recommendations about legal reforms. This includes the improvement of judicial system and separation of judiciary from the executive. He was presiding over a meeting of the parliamentary party of the Pakistan Muslim League in Islamabad today. The members were briefed about the deliberations of the meeting by the general secretary of the parliamentary party, Malik Nayim Khan. He said the minister of state for foreign affairs, Mr Zain Noorani, told the meeting about the successful completion of the second phase of the Indo-Pakistan talks on defusing tension on their common borders. He expressed satisfaction over the talks, which he said were held in an atmosphere of cordiality.

About the progress of the Geneva proximity talks, he said the Soviet Union had offered a timeframe for the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan in years, while Pakistan maintains its principled stand on a timeframe in months. He said Pakistan is taking part in the talks with hopes and optimism.

About the fabricated interview of Dr Abdul Qadir Khan [Pakistani nuclear scientist] published in the papers, Mr Zain Noorani said it was conspiracy aimed at damaging Pakistan's image at a time when American aid package was about to be discussed by the Congress.

Referring to the acquisition of AWACS aircraft by Pakistan, Mr Zain Noorani pointed that this issue was not part of the aid package. However, he said, Pakistan's delegation is in the Untied States to discuss the purchase or lease of AWACS in view of the situation on its western borders.

Mauritius Foreign Minister Meets Junejo 3 Mar

BK031652 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Mauritius Foreign Minister Sir Satcam Boolel met Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo in Rawalpindi this morning and exchanged views with him on promoting cooperation between the two countries. Sir Satcam Boolel delivered a message of best wishes from Mauritius Prime Minister Aneerood Jugnauth to Junejo. The prime minister also expressed similar sentiments.

AFP: MUSLIM Editor Quits Over Bomb 'Furor'

BK041259 Hong Kong AFP in English 1212 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] Islamabad, March 4 (AFP) — The editor of the independent daily *The Muslim*, Mushahid Hussain, resigned Wednesday because of the furor which followed the publication of an interview indicating that Pakistan had developed an atom bomb, the paper's owner, Agha Murtaza Poya, said.

The paper published last Sunday, along with the British weekly newspaper *The Observer*, an interview with Abdul Qadir Khan, head of research at the Kahuta nuclear centre, quoting him as saying that Pakistan had an A-bomb. The Pakistani Government immediately denied the report, and Mr Khan said he had been misinterpreted.

Mr Hussain, 38, has become a prominent figure in the Pakistani press in recent years, which have seen the expansion of *The Muslim*. He was present when Mr Khan gave his interview to an Indian journalist, Kuldip Nayir.

1 Killed, 3 Injured in Quetta Bomb Blast

BK041315 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1300 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] A press note issued in Quetta today says one person was killed and three others injured in a bomb blast in Quetta this morning. The injured were taken to the civil hospital where their condition is stated to be out of danger. An investigation is underway.

Press Note Issued on Violence in Wazirabad

BK020231 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 2 Mar 87

[Text] In Wazirabad, a student was killed in stone throwing and indiscriminate firing by a group of demonstrators protesting a person's criminal prosecution. A press note issued in Gujranwala says certain troublemakers spread a rumor that the student concerned was killed in police firing. Then a large number of people took to the streets, damaged some police vehicles and barricades on railway lines and roads. The press note adds that the resident magistrate and 20 policemen were injured in the incidents. The law enforcement agencies used tear gas to disperse the crowd. They later fired warning shots, injuring eight people. The situation is now fully under control.

Fadlallah Cabled on Death of Hezbollah Group
LD031615 Tehran IRNA in English 1558 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — Head of Islamic Propagation Organization (IPO) Ayatollah Ahjmad Jannati Tuesday cabled a condolence message to Hojjat ol-Eslam Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah, on the martyrdom of a group of Lebanese Hezbollah.

In his message Ayatollah Jannati stressed that the murderers should know that the act was perpetrated at the service of global arrogance and its proxies. Any repeat of such killings will not be tolerated and will surely arouse the wrath of Muslim nations of the world, the IPO added.

Red Crescent Officials Discuss Lebanon Aid
LD031748 Tehran IRNA in English 1712 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — Head of the Red Crescent Society Seyfollah Vahid Dastjerdi and Imam Khomeyni's representative to this body Hojjat ol-Eslam Ghayuri talked about Iran's assistance rendered to the Palestinians and oppressed people of Lebanon in an interview here Tuesday.

Dastjerdi said that despite Iran's own needs as a result of floods, Iraqi bombardment of the cities, and the war effort, committed Iranian people welcomed the Islamic Republic's help to their Palestinian and Lebanese brothers.

Iran sent several pick-up vans of medicine and foodstuff into Rashidiyeh camp in Tyre, by ending temporarily the four-month siege, which forced the residents to eat flesh of their dead.

Despite efforts of the arrogant mass media to discredit the humanitarian act of the Islamic Republic, Syrian and Lebanese Muslims have realised its importance, said Dastjerdi.

Red Crescent head further said that an employee of the Islamic Republic Embassy in Damascus, Mr Tabataba'i, stayed inside the camp for two months and strengthened the morale of the residents by his fasting. Tabataba'i was transferred [words indistinct] the siege was lifted from the camp, he added.

Later in the interview Hoj. Ghayuri termed the Iranian act as "significant" and said the Islamic Republic has also given assistance to Burj al-Barajinah camp as well as to theological and other schools of the city. Red Crescent has also opened an office in the area, he added.

Hoj. Ghayuri said that the situation in Lebanon was so difficult and unpredictable that even Iranian envoys, like other Lebanese, could not leave their homes for days. People were not safe even at home, he added.

Khomeyni Pardons 'Some 1,800' Prisoners
LD040432 Tehran IRNA in English 0950 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Zahedan, Sistan-Baluchistan Prov., March 3, IRNA — Some 1,800 prisoners in the provincial capital of Zahedan and cities of Zabol and Iranshahr were pardoned by Imam Khomeyni, the leader of the revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The pardons were part of the pardons given on the occasion of the eighth anniversary of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Feb 11.

Hojjat-ol-Eslam Qorbani, head of the provincial Islamic Revolution's courts said here Tuesday that out of those pardoned, some 1,300 have been released and sentences of the remainder have been commuted.

Bulgaria's Bonin Visits; Objectives Viewed
NC030639 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Bulgarian Metallurgy Minister [title as received] Mr Khristo Bonin arrived in Tehran last night at the head of a delegation. He was welcomed by Minister of Mines and Metals Mr Ayatollahi.

After his arrival in Tehran, the Bulgarian minister gave an interview to our correspondent in which he spoke about the objectives of his visit to our country. He said: We have come to Iran at the invitation of Mr Ayatollahi to hold talks and to establish commercial relations. We hope that our talks will provide a good opportunity for the expansion of trade and of technological exchanges between our two countries. Bulgaria is very interested in expanding its trade with Iran.

Our correspondent also interviewed Minister of Mines and Metals Ayatollahi on the objectives of the Bulgarian metallurgy minister's visit to Iran and on the two countries' technical cooperation. We invite you to listen to this interview.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Mr Ayatollahi, what kind of talks will be held between Iran and Bulgaria during this visit?

[Ayatollahi] In the name of God, the almighty. Mr Bonin, the respected minister of metallurgy from the friendly country of Bulgaria, will meet with the Ministries of Commerce and Oil and with the Ministry of Mines and Metals, which is hosting him. Discussions will be held on relations between our two ministries in the fields of mining, metallurgy, and iron ores. He will also talk with the Ministries of Industries, Heavy Industries, Oil, and Commerce on bilateral trade and on technological and industrial exchanges.

[Correspondent] What topics will be discussed concerning the joint session that is to be held early next year?

[Ayatollahi] The outcome of the talks to be held during this visit, as well as during the visit to be paid by the Iranians to Bulgaria, will be reflected in a protocol to be produced during the upcoming session. Among the objectives of this visit will be to prepare that protocol and to agree on common points upon which to base further activities and the expansion of technological and commercial exchanges.

[Correspondent] Will issues involving technological exchanges be assessed?

[Ayatollahi] There has been cooperation in the past between Iran and Bulgaria in the exchange of technology, and discussions on this issue have been planned between the various ministries of industry and the delegation accompanying the Bulgarian minister.

[Correspondent] What areas will be primarily covered in these talks?

[Ayatollahi] There are various areas, and we do not yet know what definite results will be reached in which fields. These talks will follow up on talks that were held in the past. We have purchased quantities of machinery and tools and various metals from Bulgaria. We have also sold oil, some industrial products, metal concentrates, and mining products to Bulgaria. We will discuss these areas, the expansion of past fields of cooperation, and new fields for additional cooperation.

[Correspondent] Thank you for this explanation. [end recording]

Begins Talks With Ayatollahi

LD031103 Tehran IRNA in English 1050 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — The first round of talks between the visiting Bulgarian metallurgy minister, Khristo Borisov Bonin, and Iran's Minister of Mines and Metals Mohammad Reza Ayatollahi started here Tuesday morning.

Industrial and technical cooperation between the two countries and ways to expand them in future were discussed.

Bonin announced readiness of his country to cooperate with Iran in [the] metallurgical field and to purchase concentrated metals from Iran.

Meanwhile, Ayatollahi expressed Iran's willingness to expand bilateral economic and trade cooperation. He also referred to Bulgaria's anti-imperialist stand.

Two expert committees on industries and mines, and commercial ties are to study grounds for trade exchanges and industrial cooperation.

Meets Oil, Agriculture Ministers

LD031804 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] The Bulgarian minister of metallurgy, who is in Tehran at the head of a delegation, met and held talks this afternoon with Oil Minister Agazadeh. During the meeting, bilateral economic and technical cooperation as well as the existing areas for increasing trade volume were discussed and studied. It was decided that delegations of experts should visit Bulgaria in the future in order to acquaint themselves with existing areas for further cooperation.

In conclusion, the Bulgarian metallurgy minister extended an official invitation to our country's oil minister to visit Bulgaria, which was accepted.

The Bulgarian metallurgy minister also met with Agriculture Minister Zali. They discussed the joint commission due to be held in Iran in the near future and called for setting up subcommittees within the framework of that commission to find existing areas of cooperation related to industries, mines and metals.

Mr Zali, in enumerating existing areas of bilateral cooperation, including agriculture, also expressed the hope that the joint commission would constitute the prelude to an expansion of cooperation.

During the meeting, an exchange of views took place about various problems, including cooperation in the field of prospecting for and extracting metals, creating modern technology, exporting raw materials and agricultural produce to Bulgaria, and cooperation in the technical field.

Italian Report of Velayati Visit to Rome Denied

LD040952 Tehran IRNA in English 0855 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] Rome, March 4, IRNA — The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Italy denied a report Tuesday of the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo* that Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati is slated to visit Rome.

The paper which reported Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz visit to Rome, claimed in its Monday issue that Velayati's visit was cancelled due to uknown reasons.

The Iranian Embassy said in its statement that no visit to Rome was scheduled for the Iranian foreign minister and that therefore there was no reason to cancel it.

Statement on Vatican Visit by Iraq's 'Aziz

NC030743 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] We invite you to listen to a report on the visit to the Vatican by the Foreign Minister of the Zionist Iraqi regime Tariq 'Aziz, and on a statement issued on this visit by the Union of Islamic Societies of Students in Europe:

[Begin recording] The Union of the Islamic Societies of Students in Europe has issued a statement in connection with the visit to the Vatican by Foreign Minister of the Zionist Iraqi regime Tariq 'Aziz. The statement says that Tariq 'Aziz intends, one way or another, to gain further support from the Vatican, headed by the pope, for world Zionism's plots to impose peace on Islamic Iran.

The statement adds: However, what is surprising here is not the behavior of the leaders of Iraq's Ba'thist-Zionist regime, but that of the Vatican, headed by his holiness the pope. He should be asked: Was Jesus Christ, may God's blessings be upon Him, a supporter of the oppressor, or a succor of the oppressed and the meek? And does Christianity permit such support for oppressors? Why doesn't the pope reject the oppressors and aid the oppressed?

In conclusion, the statement adds: We, a very small portion of the Iranian Muslim nation, call on the Vatican headed by his holiness the pope to reject this 'Aflaqite criminal and to answer the call of the oppressed.

This is the voice and vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Bonn. [end recording]

Petroleum Minister To Visit African Countries

LD041051 Tehran IRNA in English 1030 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 4, IRNA — Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh said here Wednesday that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will resist pressures on the oil market to drive prices down and will not change its fixed position on prices taken at the Dec 86 session of the organization.

Prior to departure for three African countries, Aqazadeh said that contacts among OPEC members proved that all member countries were determined and decisive in defending prices.

Aqazadeh will visit Gabon, Algeria, and Libya to hold talks with officials of these oil producing countries.

Enroute back, the Iranian oil minister will in all likelihood hold brief talks with a number of oil producing countries in the Persian Gulf region.

Asked if he was going to discuss reduction of OPEC ceiling production as a new proposal, Aqazadeh said no specific proposal would be raised, adding that if necessary oil production would be reduced to defend prices.

He said that his talks with other OPEC member states was with the objective to bring viewpoints closer and make necessary future decisions.

On an OPEC extraordinary session, he said that at present all members except for Iraq were abiding by the Dec 86 resolutions and that Iran felt there was no need to hold such a session.

He stressed that under present conditions there was no difference of opinion among OPEC members and no need for any new decisions to be taken.

Aqazadeh said the present situation in the oil market could not last long, adding that he was optimistic that the prices would rise.

He said OPEC was producing less than 15.8 million b.p.d. [barrels per day] since a number of members were producing below their official quota, which act would ultimately force oil companies to bow to their collective will.

IRNA Discusses OPEC, Decreasing Oil Prices

LD040920 Tehran IRNA in English 0850 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 4, IRNA — While oil ministers of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) have stated outright that they firmly stand by approvals of the 80th OPEC conference, in the past two weeks oil price has decreased. The oil price per barrel which was 18 dollars Feb 1, reportedly dropped to a low 16 dollars per barrel early this week.

Oil experts and analysts attribute the decline to various factors including resistance of oil consuming countries to oil prices, rise decline [as received] in oil purchase due to warm weather in Europe and America, and also use of strategic oil reserves by oil consumers.

However, analysts here are of the opinion that another decrease in production ceiling of OPEC for the second quarter of the current year will crush resistance of oil cartels and consuming countries.

According to oil experts the only way to keep up the significant upward trend of oil prices started at the end of last year, is complete observation of approvals of the OPEC Geneva 80th conference.

The measure of the OPEC, experts here point out, made oil consumer countries increase their consumption of emergency reserves from 1.5 million barrels per day to 2.2 to 2.7 million barrels per day in a period of two months.

An Oil Ministry official said that it was unlikely that OPEC members would violate the organisation's approvals even if oil prices dropped below 16 dollars. Such a violation, he said, will further agravate market instability.

The 1.5 dollar per barrel decline in oil price in the past two weeks came about at a time when Western sources reported that some OPEC members were producing below the quotas set by the organisation. At the same time OPEC members have refrained from selling oil below the price set by the organisation. Therefore, it is clear that oil companies have had a major role in oil price instability in world market.

Western oil analysts believe that oil price decline was caused not because of any violation by OPEC members, but rather by lower consumption and huge stock piles in world market. Meanwhile in January England and Norway increased their North Sea production.

An Iranian oil official has said that despite the fact the downward trend in oil prices may continue in future months, OPEC members while abiding by OPEC's previous approvals, may further cut back production ceiling of the organisation in the forthcoming Vienna session of the Pricing Committee.

It is said that certain OPEC members have agreed on an OPEC emergency meeting and others have proposed reduction in production ceiling to maintain 18 dollars per barrel. If these matters are taken into serious consideration, they may lead to oil price stability and efforts of oil companies to destabilise oil prices will be foiled.

Meanwhile Iran has continued its contacts with other OPEC members and [the] trip of the Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Ezra Aqazadeh to three oil producing countries is in this connection.

Minister on Reducing Dependence on Oil Revenues

LD031002 Tehran IRNA in English 0810 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — Minister of Plan and Budget Ma'sud Roghani Zanjani said that great momentum started at the turn of the year to move away from dependence on oil revenues, has speeded up future economic plans of the country.

Speaking in the seminar on self-sufficiency, opened here Monday he added that the move also made the officials take practical measures to break reliance on oil income.

Further in his speech he said that under the new economic plans special priority has been attached to agricultural sector.

On agricultural yields, the minister said that due to importance given to agricultural sector in post-revolution period, wheat production has increased significantly.

On trade and economic activities, he said ratio of volume of trade exchanges to gross national product in 1969 was 63 percent, in 1979 it dropped to 50 percent, and in 1985 it reached the lowest, 34 percent showing a downward trend.

Roghani Zanjani described diversification of exports as a successful economic policy and added that revenues of the non-oil exports rose to more than 700 million dollars this year (to end March 21) as compared to some 500 million dollars the previous year.

At the end of his speech he called on all Iranian specialists to assist the government in formulating short and long term economic plans.

2 Student Battalions Leave Yazd for Fronts

NC030651 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] The Central News Unit reports that two battalions of high school and university students, named the Baqer al-'Ilum battalions, ieft from Yazd for the fronts yesterday evening. The students, who were accompanied by a number of teachers, headmasters, and professors, gathered in Yazd from various parts of the province and were warmly seen off by Yazd residents.

3d Caravan of Al-Mahdi Corps Departs

NC040700 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] As part of the continued despatch of popular and fresh forces to join the combatants of Islam, the Central News Unit reports that more than one battalion of specialized combat forces departed for the fronts of the war of good against evil last night. The forces came from Ardabil, Garmi, Meshgin Shahr, Khalkhal, [name indistinct] and [name indistinct] and are part of the third caravan of the Al-Mahdi Corps. They were warmly and zealously seen off by the revolutionary and alert people of the aforementioned cities and districts.

Imam Sadeq University Students Depart

NC040711 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] The third combat caravan of students from the Imam Sadeq University departed for the fronts of the war of good against evil yesterday. In an address to the students before their departure, Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani, dean of the Imam Sadeq University, referred to the recent victories achieved by the combatants of Islam in the Karbala'-5 operation theaters. He called on the Islamic students to be unstinting in their propaganda (?efforts) and in their war against the mercenaries of Saddam's Ba'thist-Zionist regime. He also expressed the hope that, God willing, they would return from the fronts victorious and thereby fill the hearts of the world's Muslims with joy.

Further on Combat Operations in War With Iraq

'Karbala'-7' Launched in North-West

LD041402 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1345 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Unscheduled announcement]

[Text] Simultaneously with the proud victories on the southern fronts, the heroic forces of Islam by opening a new front in the north-west have started the "Karbala'-7" offensive and have achieved considerable victories.

We will keep you informed on further reports on the "Karbala'-7" offensive, as soon as we receive them, O heroic nation.

New Offensive in Hajj 'Umran Region

LD041413 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1354 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Unscheduled announcement]

[Text] The zealous combatants of the Ground Forces of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran began last night the "Karbala'-7" offensive, under the blessed codename of "O Peer of the Pious" [Ya Mowla-ye Mottaqiyan], in the Hajj 'Umran region deep inside Iraqi territory by attacking enemy positions. IRNA correspondents report that during these operations aimed at occupying the area's strategic heights, destroying the enemy's war machine, and dominating the Hajj 'Umran-Rawanduz axis the Islamic Army achieved remarkable victories, of which we will inform you as soon as we receive fresh reports.

Iraqi Battalion 'Destroyed'

LD041424 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1409 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Unscheduled announcement]

[Text] During last night's operations in the north-western fronts Islam's brave forces inflicted heavy losses and casualties on the Ba'thist enemy and also captured a number of enemy forces.

Correspondents dispatched to the "Karbala'-7" offensive zone, report that in these operations to date the 3d Battalion of the 75th Brigade of the 23d Iraqi Division has been completely destroyed and smashed. In these operations a large quantity of military equipment of that brigade was also captured by the forces of Islam.

Iraqi MiG-23 Downed
LD031642 Tehran IRNA in English 1635 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., March 3, IRNA — An Iraqi MiG-23 warplane was shot down north of Karbala'-5 (?operational zone) at 05:25 GMT Tuesday, bringing the number of downed Iraqi planes to 81 since the outset of Karbala'-5 offensive January 9.

No report was immediately available on the fate of the pilot.

Fish Lake Clashes, Casualties Viewed
LD040713 Tehran IRNA in English 0709 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] East of Basra Region, March 4 IRNA — Muslim forces of Iran by capturing strong Iraqi crescent-shaped fortifications, west of the Fish Canal, killed or wounded a great number of Iraqi troops Tuesday night.

During the operations, launched east of Basra, remnants of the Iraqi Brigade 437 with a capacity of one battalion were completely destroyed and over 200 of its personnel killed, wounded, or fled the area.

Mechanized Brigade 27 was also completely destroyed and over 800 of its personnel killed, wounded, or captured by Muslim forces of Iran. Iraqi POW's are being transferred behind the war fronts.

'Fresh Victories' Reported
LD040709 Tehran IRNA in English 0700 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] East of Basra Region, March 4, IRNA — Muslim forces of Iran in continuation of their operations east of Basra, achieved fresh victories Tuesday night, Khatem-ol-Anbiya' joint Army-IRGC Hqs. announced Wednesday.

The announcement said that in these operations, launched west of the Fish Lake, Muslim combatants of Iran, by advancing from south to north, inflicted heavy blows on Iraqi war machine.

Iraqi Brigade Sustains 300 Casualties
LD040723 Tehran IRNA in English 0715 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] East of Basra Region, March 4, IRNA — Remnants of Brigade 7 of the Iraqi Presidential Guards with a capacity of one battalion, suffered 70 percent damage by Muslim forces of Iran, Tuesday night.

A Khatem-ol-Anbiya' joint Army-IRGC Hqs. statement said Wednesday that the said brigade had been despatched to the area to reinforce the Iraqi troops.

The brigade sustained 300 casualties and was disorganized in the Tuesday night operations.

Battalion Command Centers 'Seized'
LD040812 Tehran IRNA in English 0754 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] East of Basra, March 4, IRNA — Muslim forces of Iran in continuation of their Tuesday night operations west of the Fish Lake, seized a number of command headquarters of Iraqi battalions.

In their lightning attack, the Muslim combatants of Iran crushed Iraqi military units and inflicted irreparable losses on enemy troops.

82d Iraqi Brigade 'Smashed'
LD040818 Tehran IRNA in English 0812 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] East of Basra Region, March 4, IRNA — The Iraqi Commando Brigade 82 was completely smashed in Tuesday night operations of the Muslim force of Iran in Karbala'-5 operational region.

Some 500 personnel of the brigade were either killed, wounded, or captured by the Iranian troops.

In these operations backed by heavy artillery fire and engineering units of the construction jihad and the Khatem-ol-Anbiya' Hqs., a vast area under Iraqi control was attacked and heavy damage and losses were inflicted on enemy forces.

The Muslim combatants of Iran took over strongholds of the Iraqis and Iranian anti-tank units destroyed large portion of the Iraqi armaments.

Some 30 tanks, personnel carriers, vehicles, and engineering equipment of the enemy are reported destroyed and set ablaze.

'Blitz' Causes 2,500 Iraqi Casualties
LD040821 Tehran IRNA in English 0708 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] East of Basra, March 4, IRNA — Iraqi Infantry Brigade 505 and Mechanized Brigade 24 which had been reorganized and despatched to this operational region, were smashed in the Tuesday night operations of Muslim forces of Iran west of the Fish Lake.

Over 800 personnel of the two brigades were killed or wounded and large amount of their munitions destroyed.

Muslim combatants of Iran in their fresh blitz attack on Iraqi troops, inflicted irreparable blows on Iraqi war machine by killing or wounding over 2,500 Iraqi troops and capturing a number of others in this area.

Some 60 Iraqi POW's have been transferred behind the war fronts among whom there are four officers and a number of NCO's.

In Tuesday night operations, also Infantry Brigades 115 and 78 were destroyed and over 500 of their personnel killed or wounded.

Correspondent on Karbala'-5 Acts

NC040830 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] Our correspondent in the Karbala'-5 operation theater has sent us a report on the activities undertaken by the combatants of Islam in this arena yesterday. We invite you to listen to this report:

[Begin recording] In the name of God, the almighty. O resistant and brave Iranian nation! The courageous children of Islam carried out fresh operations yesterday to defend positions in the Karbala'-5 theater. These operations were undertaken to display the strength and readiness of the combatants of Islam stationed in positions throughout the entire Karbala'-5 operation theater, to destroy the enemy forces, and to upset the military formation of the helpless and weak forces of the Ba'thist infidels. The combatants of Islam achieved new victories through these operations with divine succor and with the help of the prayers of our resistant and brave people.

A commander from a battalion of the Islamic army made the following statement during an interview on the operations yesterday: In the very first hours of the war with the enemy, our battalion set fire to at least 20 tanks and vehicles belonging to the Saddamists. Commenting on the morale of the Iraqi soldiers, the commander asserted: Despite the fact that they are positioned in extremely strong fortresses shaped like half arches with a radius of 400 to 600 meters and located 6 to 8 meters above the ground, the enemy forces suffer extremely weak morale. He added: By utilizing a special and complicated military procedure, our troops have succeeded in bringing the enemy forces down from their positions and their high and strong fortresses and killed or wounded hundreds of them.

According to reports sent by our correspondents from the front-lines, the enemy has been greatly disturbed by the coordinated effort launched by the artillery forces and the Islamic Revolution Guards' Ground Forces supported by the Islamic Republic's Air Force.

An Iraqi soldier who claimed to be from Baghdad made the following statement to one of our correspondents: Our company was sent to this area 5 months ago. We were told that the Iranian forces would never be able to pass through the crescent-shaped fortresses which are more than 6 meters high and located behind five rows of barbed wire and minefields. Despite all these obstacles, however, our entire company was either killed or captured by the forces of Islam. With the assistance of God, victory is at hand. [Koranic verse] From the correspondent dispatched to the Karbala'-5 operation theater. [end recording]

Fortifications East of Basra Fall

LD041116 Tehran IRNA in English 1052 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] East of Basra, March 4, IRNA — The strongest Iraqi fortifications and defense lines known as "crescent-shaped" lines north of the Fish Lake, fell in the Tuesday night blitz attack of Muslim forces of Iran.

An [words indistinct] IRNA that Iraq's Third Corps had constructed the most formidable defense lines east of Basra in the wake of Iran's bayt al-moqaddas operations which led to the liberation of [name indistinct] five years ago.

To this end, he added, the Iraqi regime had erected a number of crescent-shaped defense walls at least 8 meters high and 700 meters in length in the operational area west of the Fish Lake.

Along the walls, the commander said, several rows of canals, barbed wires, explosive barrels, mine fields, electronic warning equipment, and other barricades had been installed to make the area impenetrable.

The commander said that the fall of the enemy defense lines east of Basra, which may have been one of the strongest in the world, proved that nothing could hinder the advance of Muslim forces of Iran.

He added that despite unsuitable weather conditions, armoured units of Ground Forces of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps along with infantry forces, played a key role in the operations launched west of the Fish lake.

Meanwhile, the commander said, heavy artillery fire of Iranian forces deprived the enemy of any chance to respond.

The commander also praised the commitment and services rendered by construction jihad volunteers.

Referring to the heavy casualties inflicted on Iraqi enemy east of Basra, the commander said that during the past 48 hours at least 3,400 Iraqi troops were killed or wounded, adding that there were 11 senior officers among the dead and injured.

He said that a number of Iraqi troops were also captured, 60 of whom have been transferred behind the war fronts including a number of officers and NCO's.

Khatem ol-Anbiya' Communique

LD041218 Tehran IRNA in English 1203 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 4, IRNA — At least 3,300 Iraqi troops were killed or wounded when enemy Brigades Numbers 78, 504, 505, 115 (Infantry), 24 and 26 (Mechanized), 82 (Commando), and remnants of Brigades 7 (of the Presidential Guard) and 437 (Infantry) were crushed by Iran's Muslim Forces in Karbala'-5 operational theater east of Basra on Tuesday and Wednesday morning.

A military communique released by Khatem ol-Anbiya' Joint Army-IRGC Hqs. Wednesday, further said that Iranian troops,

in continuation of their operations east of Basra, made more advances in the axis west of the Fish Canal and from south to the northwestern tip of the canal on Tuesday and Wednesday morning.

The communique also said that the Iranian forces took over new defence lines during their fresh operation and that they were still advancing.

Many Iraqi troops from the above-mentioned enemy brigades were also taken capitive and the rest fled the operational region, it said. So far, the communique said, 120 Iraqis including four officers and a number of NCO's, have been moved behind the fronts. It said that 30 enemy tanks and personnel carriers were also destroyed and large quantities of their engineering equipment were set ablaze during the blitz attack of Iranian troops.

The Khatem ol-Anbiya' communique added that Iran's advancing forces had also taken over crescent-shaped Iraqi fortifications west of the Fish Canal. It said the Iranian combatants were engaged in heavy artillery duels and at the same time were fortifying their positions in the operational theater.

Giving an account of the Baghdad regime's aggressive nature and desperation in the war fronts, the communique referred to the Iraqi-initiated 'war of cities' and its inhuman military attacks on Iranian schools which took the lives of so many boy and girl school children.

The Iraqi regime, it said, even after discontinuing its savage attacks on civilians in Iran, announced certain conditions such as that Iran should not attack Iraqi cities and that it should not launch new operations in the war fronts but that "Iraq will still have the right to attack Iran's economic installations and jeopardize shipping in the Persian Gulf."

Even after stopping its military attacks on civilians in Iran, the Iraqi regime practically continued its aggressions of this kind. This, the communique stressed, took place under conditions that the enemy war machine had been crushed in the course of Iran's victorious Karbala'-5 operations (Jan 9 - Feb 16). [date as received]

The Baghdad regime, it added, once again displayed its aggressive nature and put it in practice while it was continuing its peace claims.

Therefore, Iran's Muslim forces once again attacked the disorganised rank of enemy troops to inflict yet another blow on the tottering army of Saddam Husayn, concluded the communique

Communique No 2,764

LD031546 Tehran IRNA in English 1530 GMT 3 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA — At least 25 Iraqi soldiers were killed and 10 gun emplacements as well as several vehicles destroyed when enemy positions and strongholds came under artillery fire of Iranian Gendarmerie forces in parts of the western and southern fronts Monday and Tuesday, said a military communique here today.

Joint Staff Communique No 2,764 said that heavy mortar and artillery fire of the Muslim forces set afire parts of Iraqi defense positions in Piranshahr, Hajj Umran, Sardasht, and Marivan operational regions destroying some military vehicles and killing or wounding a number of enemy troops.

Iranian naval forces maintained full control of shipping traffic in Hormuz Strait in a bid to protect territorial waters. They also checked all Iraqi movements in Khawr 'Abdallah waterway Monday and Tuesday, said the communique.

In the western and southern fronts, the communique said, sporadic exchange of artillery, mortar and tank fire continued with Iranian forces consolidating their defense positions and checking reconnaissance flights of Iraqi helicopters in Qasr-e Shirin region.

Movement of two Iraqi tanks was also halted by artillery fire of the Muslim combatants in Nahr-e Anbar, said the communique.

Communique No 2,765

LD041422 Tehran IRNA in English 1403 GMT 4 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 4, IRNA — Iraqi forces sustained heavy casualties and losses in artillery duels with Iran's Muslim combatants throughout the fronts on Tuesday, said a military communique released by the Joint Staff Command of the Islamic Republic's Armed Forces here Wednesday.

Communique Number 2,765 said that a number of Iraqi soldiers were killed or wounded, and at least 10 enemy gun emplacements and observation posts and two munitions dumps destroyed in parts of the southern and western fronts on Tuesday when they were shelled by Iranian Gendarmerie forces.

Heavy Iranian artillery fire on Iraqi positions in the western fronts on Tuesday killed or wounded several Iraqi soldiers and set afire vast parts of enemy fortifications. Two heavy Iraqi vehicles were also destroyed.

Heavy casualties and losses were inflicted on Iraqi troops and their engineering operations were halted by Iranian artillery fire in Sar Dasht, Kalaleh, and Hajj 'Umran on Tuesday.

Muslim forces of Iran opened heavy fire on Iraqi logistical and armoured columns in Yabis and Faqqeh, southern fronts, Tuesday, destroying some enemy tanks and several trucks carrying equipment and ammunition.

Iraqi positions were pounded and enemy patrol operatons suppressed in the southern fronts by Iranian artillery fire on Tuesday, the communique concluded.